

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A multiple gear ratio transmission device, adapted to connect an engine to a load such as a motor vehicle, comprising:

- an upper shaft (2),
- a lower shaft (4),
- ~~connected to each other by at least two power paths (8a, 8b), at least one of which defines at least two gear ratios, the gear ratios differing from one path to another~~ which are each capable of interconnecting the upper shaft and the lower shaft, wherein each power path comprises at least two power sub-paths, each of which defines a respective transmission ratio between the upper shaft and the lower shaft,

- ~~on for each power sub-path, one respective selective activators (18a, 18b; 118a, 218a, 318a, 118b, 218b, 318b) to establish each determined gear ratio and to deactivate in terms of power transmission at least one path other than the path defining the aforementioned determined gear ratio,~~
characterised in that:

- ~~the connection between the upper shaft (2) and a respective input unit (9a, 9b) of each of the power paths (8a, 8b) is permanent; and~~
- ~~the selective activators are~~ aviator which is of a gradual type and/or able to adapt the speed of the engine to the speed of the load during engagement process to match the engine speed and load speed with each other wherein each power sub-path is uninterrupted between the upper shaft and the lower shaft except by disengagement of its respective selective activator.

2. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the selective activators are wet multi-disc friction couplings (118a, 218a, 318a ; 118b, 218b, 318b).

3. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, characterised in that at least some of the selective activators are brakes (~~118a, 318a, 118b, 218b~~) that selectively connect a reaction member to a housing (~~22~~) of the transmission device.

4. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that each power path (~~8a, 8b~~) is kinematically independent and comprises an output unit (~~11a, 11b~~) permanently connected to the lower shaft (~~4~~).

5. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the two power paths (~~8a, 8b~~) are approximately identical and are capable of obtaining between their input unit (~~9a, 9b~~) and their output unit (~~11a, 11b~~) identical local gear ratios, but are connected to the upper shaft (~~2~~) and/or the lower shaft (~~4~~) with a different transfer ratio.

6. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that each power path (~~8a, 8b~~) is capable of a local direct drive gear ratio.

7. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that ~~each selective activator can be placed in a neutral state, so that each gear ratio of a power path is obtained by placing a single activator in an activated state, whilst the~~ each power path is placed in neutral when all of the selective activators of the power path are in a ~~neutral~~ disengaged state.

8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that at least one of the power paths comprises at least one planetary gear train (~~123a, 223a; 123b, 223b~~).

10. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that at least one (~~8b~~) of the power paths comprises a first and a second planetary gear trains (~~123b, 223b~~), respectively comprising:

- first and second planet carriers (~~124b, 224b~~), in which the planet pinions are mounted in pairs (~~128i, 128e; 228i, 228e~~) in series,

- first and second sun gears (126b, 226b),
- first and second ring gears (127b, 227b),

in that:

- the two ring gears (127b, 227b) are attached to the output unit (11b) of the power path,
- the first planet carrier (124b) and the second sun gear (226b) are attached to the an input unit (9b) of the power path,

and in that the selective activators comprise:

- a brake (118b) for the first sun gear (126b),
- a brake (218b) for the second planet carrier (224b),
- a direct drive clutch (318b).

11. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that at least one (8a) of the power paths comprises first and second planetary gear trains (123a, 223a), respectively comprising:

- first and second planet carriers (124a, 224a),
- first and second sun gears (126a, 226a),
- first and second ring gears (127a, 227a),

in that:

- the first ring gear (127a) and the second planet carrier (224a) are attached to the an output unit (11a) of the power path,
- the first planet carrier (124a) and the second sun gear (226a) are attached to the an input unit (9a) of the power path,

and in that the selective activators comprise:

- a brake (118a) for the second ring gear (227a),
- a brake (318a) for the first sun gear (126a),
- a direct drive clutch (218a).

12. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that at least one of the input units (9a) and output units (11a) on each path (8a) is located in an intermediate position between the spatial ends of the path.

13. (cancelled)

14. (currently amended) A device according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~
characterized in that it comprises controls (17) capable of synchronising the gradual placing of a selective activator in a neutral state with the gradual placing of another selective activator in an activated state.